

## Two receive Superintendent's Award

Dawna Alphonse  
CORRESPONDENT

Shrewsbury High School seniors Yufei Liu and Kristen Koch have been named this year's recipients of the Superintendent's Award. Recipients are chosen based on their record of academic excellence. Liu and Koch belong to the National Honor Society which requires a grade point average of 4.0 or higher plus service to the community.

Cutler Brown Development has awarded Liu and Koch each with a \$500 scholarship. Both students have been invited to a scholar's luncheon at Clark University where they will meet other award recipients from Worcester County.

Koch participates in indoor and outdoor track and expects to bring that interest to college next year where she plans to major in English or the Humanities. She said, "People see track as an individual sport. It's more than just running for yourself, it's competing for the team."

She is active in First Congregational Church programs and the high school a cappella choir. She enjoys singing for people and said, "It's nice to have people respond to you."

Yufei Liu spent six weeks this summer with other student scientists in California. Their collective interest in science culminated in telescopic observation of an asteroid and the writing of a computer program to calculate its orbit. The data's accuracy was then verified at The Harvard Smithsonian.

Liu has his sights set on Stanford or Yale with a major in biochemistry or medicine. Until then he will be practicing for the upcoming Academic Decathlon and Math team competitions.



PHOTO BY DAWNA ALPHONSE

Yufei Liu



PHOTO BY DAWNA ALPHONSE

Kristen Koch

# Alden Harris joins school committee

A new face has been welcomed to the Shrewsbury School Committee. Alden Harris, a lifelong Shrewsbury resident, has been chosen to replace Nancy Hochstein, who resigned for personal reasons. Harris was a student of Shrewsbury's public schools. He attended Calvin

## THEA DIAMANTOPOULOS

HIGH SCHOOL JUNIOR



Coolidge Elementary School and continued on to graduate from the Shrewsbury High School on Oak Street in 1987. Harris then furthered his education at Fitchburg State College as an undergraduate and later received his MBA from Babson College.

Harris grew up on the same street that his family have lived on for several generations.

Harris became interested in becoming a part of the School Committee because the way in which the school system is run is very important to him, especially with his two young sons attending the schools.

His passion for improving the issues of Shrewsbury's school system progressed overtime. From being on the Coolidge School Coordinating Council and volunteering on many non-profit boards in the past ten years, Harris brings valuable experience to his new position.

Now a commercial banker lending money to many large manufacturers, Harris insists that there are many connections between his profession and his School Committee position. Many of the circumstances that face manufacturers and businesses face schools as well, allowing him to make financial and policy decisions when it comes to the schools and their budgets.

When asked about his philosophy of a public school, Harris stated that the teachers are undoubtedly the backbone. "The talent of diverse and motivated teachers is the main driving factor that inspires kids to learn," adds Harris. He believes that teaching is an art form.

As a Shrewsbury School Committee member, Harris feels that asking questions and researching them to the fullest extent will benefit the Shrewsbury community. He plans on running again after this current term expires.



PHOTO BY DAWNA ALPHONSE

Alden Harris, III

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## 2003 MCAS Results

JUDITH EVANS  
ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

*In April and May 2003, students in grades three through ten completed MCAS testing in Reading, English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science/Technology.*

### Purposes of MCAS

MCAS serves two main purposes. First, it measures the performance of individual students, schools and school districts against established state curriculum frameworks. Secondly, it promotes improved instruction in the classroom.

The Education Reform Act requires that all students, in addition to meeting local requirements, pass the Grade 10 MCAS as a requirement for the awarding of a high school diploma. Students who do not pass both the English/language arts and math tests in grade 10 will have multiple additional opportunities to pass the test.

### Interpreting Results

Each student's performance is reported according to one of four performance levels: advanced, proficient, and needs improvement or failing.

The state no longer provides data relating to average scaled scores received by students in a content area or school. The current best way to evaluate performance is to review the percentage of students in each performance level category.

### General Results

Shrewsbury Public Schools ranked

30th of 210 school districts, as reported by the Boston Globe, on the 2003 MCAS. The rankings were compiled by comparing the median percentages of proficient and advanced categories on all reported MCAS tests. Please note that the previous rankings were based on average scaled scores. Thus, it is difficult to make comparisons between this result and that of previous years when reviewing the district's relative progress.

Shrewsbury's relative ranking 30/210 in 2003 represents a slight decrease from last year's performance. The following summarizes the district's relative ranking for the past six years:

2003	30th of 210 districts
2002	26th of 212 districts
2001	24th of 211 districts
2000	19th of 208 districts
1999	22nd of 210 districts
1998	23rd of 210 districts

Shrewsbury High School ranked 19/273 schools in Massachusetts, as measured by percentages of student passing the E/LA and math portions of the exam.

On most tests (Grade 3 Reading, Grade 6 Math, Grade 7 Language Arts, Grade 8 Math, Grade 8 Science/Technology, Grade 10 Language Arts, and Grade 10 Math) the percentage of students scoring in the warning/failing performance categories decreased. On the remaining tests (Grade 4 Math, Grade 4 Language Arts) the percentage of students in the warn-

ing/failing performance categories increased.

Significant areas of improvement were seen in the following tests/grade levels:

► Grade 5 Science/Technology, where Shrewsbury students out-scored the state in all categories.

► Grade 6 Mathematics, which saw more students move into the Advanced category.

► Grade 7 Language Arts, which saw a significant increase in the number of students in the Proficient and Advanced categories.

► Grade 10 Math, which saw very significant improvement in the percentages of students who scored in the Advanced and Proficient categories.

### Next Steps

The district has already taken steps to address issues identified through the initial analysis of the 2003 MCAS results. Some of these steps include:

1. Analysis of results by cross-grade level teams at the District Leadership Team level. This analysis will be used to recommend changes in curriculum and instruction.

2. Application for all available state grant funds to run MCAS school year and summer programs for MCAS remediation for 2003-2004. Please note that this funding has decreased substantially and is only available for high school use.

3. The creation of Title I mathematics and reading support classes at the middle school.

## PAC News Brief:

The Shrewsbury Special Education Parent Advisory Council (PAC) held a meeting this fall in the newly renovated Parker Road School training facility. Co-chair Mrs. Bar-

bara Smith opened the meeting and announced the resignation of Co-chair Keith Willette. Fortunately, Keith intends to remain as a active PAC member. A lively program concerning special education laws, regulations and parent's rights was presented by Steve Dupuis, Special

Education Director. The current laws and the anticipated reauthorization of IDEA 2004 were discussed. Following the program elections were held and Barbara Smith was reelected along with Mrs. Sarah Fallon as this year's PAC Co-chairs.